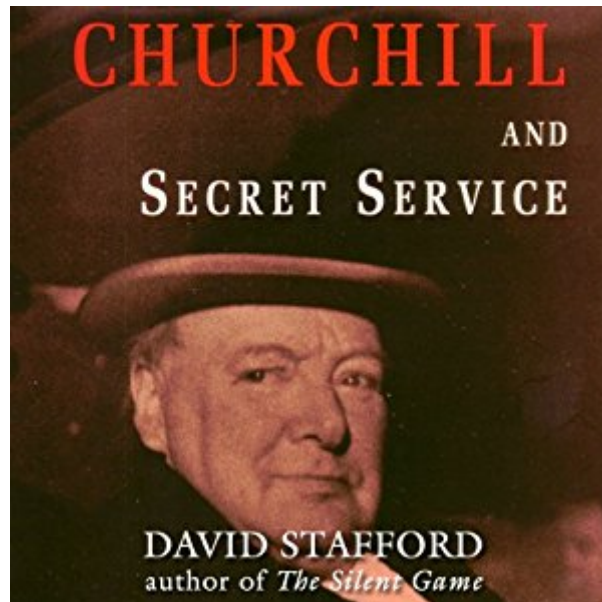# Churchill And Secret Service

Synopsis

Winston Churchill believed passionately in the value of secret intelligence, in times of war as well as of peace. As a young correspondent and soldier in Cuba and South Africa, he experienced its worth first hand. As wartime Prime Minister, he built a centralized intelligence community, responded daily to raw "Ultra" reports, created the Special Operations Executive to work behind enemy lines and, with Roosevelt, built the intelligence alliance that endures to this day. Historian David Stafford makes the compelling case that one cannot understand Churchill's astounding success as a modern day statesman without reference to his deep involvement in the world of espionage. With absorbing detail about the secret world of agents and double-agents, this groundbreaking work traces Churchill's connections with that world, from his days as a member of the Cabinet that established the Secret Service to the war years, when his extensive intelligence network provided him with superior information. What results is a major contribution to the study of modern and military history and a crucial missing key to understanding Churchill himself. --This text refers to the CD-ROM edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Churchill and Secret Service" documents the life long connection between him and secret intelligence. The author traces this back to Churchill's experience as a journalist in the Cuban revolt against Spain. His romantic nature, combined with the undisputed effectiveness of the guerillas, instilled in him a faith in guerilla warfare and its requirement of good intelligence. The book

continues through Churchill's association with "room 40" during WWI, and his continued receipt of intelligence reports during the years "in the wilderness". Naturally the bulk of the work concerns itself with the Second World War, the creation of SOE and the secret armies. The author delves into the "special relationship" between the UK and US and reveals in detail the serious conflicts between SIS/SOE and the OSS-an area that often does not receive much attention by historians. Churchill's second term as prime minister,and subsequent retirement conclude the work. What it shows is that Churchill, probably more than any other political leader, understood the value and the dangers of secret intelligence, and knew how to employ it (most of the time). His experience provides excellent lessons to those who collect or use strategic/operational intelligence,"intelligence was not an end in itself and did not belong to those who produced it." Would that our current intelligence structure followed this advice...

A little more time spent on Churchill's life and career, and the times in which he lived, would be helpful to making this book more readable and more interesting. I found myself going to the internet often to look up passing references of names and events to understand what the author was conveying about Churchill. I realize many many books have been written as traditional birth-to-death biographies about him, but that doesn't mean we've all read them, as the author perhaps has. I couldn't get through the whole book because it was too technical, too myopic.

This is an excellent work from an author that thoroughly researches every detail of the subject before it is put to print. As all of Staffords work, the factual basis is unquestionable. Anyone that reads this work will have a deep understanding of the time period and the personalities involved.

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